

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANKILLON.

PART IV. PHOEBE'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER VI. RALPH BASSETT'S WISH.

SIR CHARLES BASSETT, fearful of making a false step in the dark, lest it should be straight into a pitfall prepared for him by his incomprehensible enemies, proved himself, in little things, to be really the admirable diplomatist that he had once fancied himself in great things. Understanding nothing, he took care that nobody else should understand anything at all of what had been going on under the public eye.

"My dear Mrs. Urquhart," he had said, when the lady, indignant at the escape of the self-accused robber, demanded a hue and cry, "I am rather glad, on the whole, that my boy behaved so much like—a boy. You have recovered your property, and Miss Doyle has recovered hers, without much trouble and with none of the public fuss and exposure which of course you, as a refined and kindly lady, would dislike extremely. Perhaps, we are, as your husband seems inclined to hold, compounding a felony; but I'm afraid Ralph has done worse, by aiding the escape of a criminal. As things are, nobody knows the rights of the matter but ourselves. If you will let matters rest, you will be conferring a personal favour upon us all—upon me."

"But the principle of the thing, Sir Charles! It isn't of myself, I assure you, that I'm thinking, but of the hundreds of poor unprotected ladies who can't stand guarding their jewel-cases with loaded pistols all day long. To let this man go is to let him loose upon society; it is a duty we owe

to our fellow-creatures to have him caught and sent to gaol. I would go through a great deal of disagreeable trouble for the sake of principle, Sir Charles. Mr. Urquhart will tell you what I'm capable of in that way. Have you ever known me give up a principle, Alexander, since I married you—"

"Never," answered her husband with sad solemnity.

"Then," said Sir Charles, "the favour will be all the greater. Your husband shall not be more grateful to you for your first breach of principle than I shall be for your second. I admire principle so much myself, that you may be sure I shall sympathise with you most cordially. Poor young fellow! And he looked and seemed so much like a gentleman. It is very strange."

"There I must differ from you, Sir Charles. To my eyes—and they are pretty sharp ones—a more villainous face and a more offensive manner I never saw. I said to Mr. Urquhart that very night, as we were going to bed, 'That Mr. Nelson has the face of a criminal.' Didn't I, Alexander?"

"No doubt, since you say so," said Alexander. "It is a safe principle in metaphysics that memory, being positive by nature, is more trustworthy than forgetfulness, which is by nature negative. If A remembers a thing, and B forgets, the thing in question will have happened, you may be sure."

"As if one wanted metaphysics to see the nose on one's face!" said she with some scorn. "Well, since you ask me, Sir Charles, and for the sake of your family, I will consent to waive principle this time. But that man will come to the gallows yet

—mark my words. Don't let anybody, when that comes to pass, say I never told you so."

"I thank you with all my heart," said Sir Charles, making her the slight bow, with the dash of gallantry in it, that he knew pleased her.

That matter settled, he was free to consider the case of Miss Doyle:

Naturally, he did not believe in the telegram which had carried her off too suddenly to permit of her seeing her host to bid him good-bye, or even to leave him a message of explanation. Phil had never meant that he should, or cared for anybody's belief or otherwise, so long as Phoebe could be got out of Cautleigh Hall, on any pretext, in time to leave danger behind her.

Sir Charles, having made enquiries, easily gathered, in spite of the confused condition of the household at the return of Stanislas under arrest, that no telegram had come to the Hall, for anybody, at the given time. Every servant assumed that it must have been taken in by another, and Sir Charles, taking care to leave each under that impression, questioned them one by one until none was left to question. The story of the telegram he traced to Mrs. Hassock, and she was as likely to be merely the repeater as she was to be the inventor of a lie. So it seemed that Miss Doyle, with scarcely a colourable pretext, had taken precipitate flight at the very moment when her accomplice was brought back a prisoner. She had not even stayed on the chance of recovering her lost valuables. Had she really lost them, and had Stanislas taken them, she surely would have stayed. Yet why should she take to flight when, as was obvious now, she had not given those things to Stanislas, and so had nothing to fear in the way of overt proof of her connection with him? She had really been robbed, and by the least likely of strangers, and yet she had run off in the style of a detected criminal.

With the other guests he accepted the story of the telegram, and even supplied the little touches that were needed to take off the edge of the strangeness of Miss Doyle's sudden departure. Nor did he make any difference towards Ralph, for he had his reasons for keeping from his son's mind every vaguest suspicion that there might ere long be a battle for the possession of Cautleigh Hall. He did not mean to lose, and if his son were taken into confidence before the enemy's case was brought

face to face with a stronger, Ralph might not impossibly turn out to be the worst enemy of all. And besides, if legal right and moral wrong had, as seemed likely enough, to be met with weapons for which law has a bad name, Sir Charles, ready enough to use them with his own hands, for his son's sake, recoiled from the idea of letting Ralph guess what sort of weapons his father might be driven to use. Many a robber desires to bring up his son in honest ignorance of the crimes to which his fortune is to be owed.

What might be the particular enquiries which had brought Miss Doyle and her fellow-conspirator to Cautleigh Hall, he had never been able to decipher by means of any satisfactory theory. Still, as from the beginning, it was the seemingly barren purposelessness of her proceedings that not only baffled but alarmed him. Some purpose there must be, to require all this machinery of disguises and clandestine communications, more than that of merely discovering how the land lay. It must be to collect evidence of right; perhaps to invent and deposit evidence with an insane view of making a weak right into a strong one. Could Cautleigh Hall contain, and be known by the rightful heir to contain, any documentary evidence of identity or title that required careful and secret searching, such as might be carried on by an unsuspected lady-guest and the confidential valet of the young master? Surely there could be nothing of the kind. But—the thought came into his head like an inspiration—something else there might indeed be, something of such overwhelming importance as to make the otherwise rightful heir's entire right hang upon its discovery and destruction. What was more likely than that some prudent Bassett should have made a will, in order to exclude the disgraceful Rayner, by which Cautleigh would come to the younger branch represented by Sir Charles, by a better title than that of Rayner's accidental heirloom at law? Testators have done infinitely odder things than make wills, and then hide them where they are least likely to be found. So common a form of eccentricity would be sensible compared with that of leaving a loophole for the admission of such a man as Rayner Bassett was known to have been—sot, profligate, forger—everything that a Lincolnshire baronet ought not to be.

Sir Charles, be it remembered, had been a literary and dramatic dabbler in his time,

so that the idea presented itself to him in a less strange shape than if he had been born in the county magistracy. He had cultivated an orthodox contempt for sentimental emotion and romantic incident, but the leopard was, at heart, the spotted leopard still. He had come a complete stranger to Cautleigh Hall; he had never known the place till he came there as master. Its family mysteries were Greek to him, while to Rayner Bassett not a hole of the place or a tradition of the family could be unknown. Who so likely as Rayner Bassett, alias Jack Doyle, to know of a will that cut him off hopelessly from his own? And if that will were nowhere else to be found, a very simple process of logic would lead the scent straight to Cautleigh Hall.

"There's one strong point about that theory," thought Sir Charles; "that it accounts for everything. The young lady to pry above stairs; the lacquey to grope below. Their attempted flight together, her actual flight, as soon as the paper—if there be one—was found. As to the jewel business, that must be a coincidence—a queer one, doubtless, and a bewildering one to a man without a clear brain and his wits well about him, but still only a coincidence, and nothing more. It must have put the other side out, even more than it has me. But if I am not leaping in the dark, if we hold under a will, and that will be indeed in the hands of an unscrupulous scoundrel who has already shown himself capable of forgery! I wonder what they paid that poor scamp of a Pole for his part of the ferreting? Not so much, I fancy, that I can't buy out of him what his part may have been. If there was a will, it is now destroyed. If it has been destroyed, it was because it excluded Rayner Bassett, and supported my title to everything that a will can carry. If so, justice requires that will to be restored. They could not deny the authenticity of the restored will without admitting their possession and destruction of an old one, to the same purpose, and that, I imagine, a man like Rayner Bassett would hardly dare to do in the face of a man like me. It would be fine to see the effect of the flourish of a will in their faces that they thought they had destroyed. Forgery, Urquhart would call it. Well, it mayn't have to be done, after all. But it may. No lawyer's quibble shall transfer Cautleigh Hall from Ralph Bassett to a scoundrel—a forger. And if dirty work

must be done, for justice sake, Ralph's fingers at least shall not be stained." He rang the bell. "Send Stanislas to me," said he.

Stanislas, restored to innocence, and free, thanks to Phil Nelson, from all suspicion of dishonesty, was entitled to pose as a martyr who might even demand compensation for his sufferings. He came at once to Sir Charles, and stood before his master's father with what looked like an air of sullen injury, tempered with large-minded melancholy, which only refrains from forgiving because it is too modest to intrude upon the privilege of higher powers.

Sir Charles Bassett was really a better diplomatist than he now believed. He knew when to go straight to the point, and how.

"Monsieur Adrianski," said he, "how much has Mr. Doyle promised to give you when he becomes master of Cautleigh Hall?"

Stanislas opened his eyes. But the simple rascal did not venture to contradict, before knowing to what the question might lead. So he closed his eyes again, and allowed himself to look a little indignant and a little confused. The British diplomat felt that he read this poor foreign knave through and through.

"Come," said he, "your game is up. You may as well have it all out, and have done. I'm not going to be hard on a man who has been merely hired to do a certain work, and has no doubt done it well. I dare say you fancy that your secret meetings with Miss Doyle were unseen, and that you, the spy, have not turned out to be the spied. Who has that paper you were employed to search for—you, or Miss Doyle? If I'm wrong," thought he, "I shall soon see that everything I'm saying is Greek and Hebrew to the man. If I'm right, he's not the sort to stick at selling Uncle Rayner for anything on earth, paid down."

His logic was admirable. But, being a gentleman in his way, he forgot one thing, that a certain sort of knave will manage to sell something even when he has nothing to sell, if only the purchaser. It was all Greek and Hebrew to the Polish nobleman, indeed. But if he owned it, he felt that it was he who would be sold.

"The paper?" asked he.

"Yes. You mayn't know what it is, I dare say you don't; but the paper that is now either in Miss Doyle's hands or in yours. In whose is all I need to know."

"It is clear, Sir Charles, you know much. And if I shall know how much——"

"You're a cool hand, Mr. Adrianski, upon my word. Take it that I know how you came into my son's service; why you came here; the nature of your service to be rendered to Miss Doyle. Come, you needn't be afraid. If you give me that paper now, then, on the word of a gentleman—do you know what that means?"

"Who else shall know but me? I am a gentleman in my own country, Sir Charles."

"Well, it's something to be a gentleman somewhere. I won't drive a bargain; I won't hide from you that the paper is of more value to me than the sum I offer you. The minute that paper is in my hands you shall receive—let me see—a hundred pounds. Yes; a hundred pounds."

The bargain may seem crude and by no means likely to obtain its end. But Sir Charles knew what he was about very well.

"One hundred pound," mused Stanislas. Clearly some paper had been stolen, and Phoebe must have been the thief, since the question lay between him and her. Why should he refuse the possible profit of a hundred pounds? Why, by denying his knowledge, should he deprive himself of the chance of earning a paltry ten? Of course he would never be able to recover the missing paper. But—— "Yes, Sir Charles," said he; "I have it not, or I would give it now. But that Phoebe——"

"Phoebe, you coxcomb! Is that how you speak of a lady?" asked Sir Charles, whom the success of his examination was putting almost into a good-humour. "Ah, I see I was not wrong in spotting you two for something more than you seemed."

"The penetration of monsieur," said Stanislas, "is sublime. I see it is not useful to hide things from him. She is charming. We are good friends, Sir Charles, for all I am but a valet, and she a my lady, a true demoiselle. But I have to go to London; I know not where. Will it be too much to ask an advance of twenty pounds—and the wages I lose?"

"You shall have your wages, of course, and twenty pounds in gold," said Sir Charles.

Stanislas had expected to be beaten down to ten, perhaps five, and must have sorely repented that he had not asked for fifty. Still, twenty pounds was not a bad profit for a discharged valet to make by

merely pretending to know as much as he was supposed to know.

"I shall never see that paper," thought Sir Charles. "He'll tell Doyle, and Doyle will give him twice the money and promise him ten times. I shall never see Mr. Adrianski again. But it was worth twenty times twenty pounds to learn that my guess about the will was not wrong. I should have distanced the field in cross-examination if I'd ever put on my wig and gown. That will will be destroyed, and I shall be in a position to trace it to their hands, if they dare to assert anything I choose to produce unreal."

It must not be supposed for a moment that Sir Charles Bassett dreamed of emulating Uncle Rayner by committing a forgery. It is of the essence of crime to be wrong. Sir Charles could not feel that keeping Cautleigh Hall and the honour of an ancient house from the hands of the traditional Rayner Bassett could possibly be wrong.

Not on this day, but after Stanislas had again, after his manner, vanished from the scene, Mrs. Hassock in her indignant impulse and natural desire to recover her own—for a black bag is an estate no less than Cautleigh Hall—arrived at the house where she had lived for so many weeks as Miss Doyle's maid. Had she known how welcome she would be to the owner as another subject for cross-examination, she would have gone to work more boldly. As things were, the expenses of her journey had cooled her impulse, and she felt that her intention of cross-examining a baronet about the proceedings of his friends might prove a little more awkward than distance had allowed it to appear. However, she easily cut short the surprise of an acquaintance in livery who let her in, and avoided the questionings of the servants' hall by taking up her position as a visitor on important business, in the library, for she was now a lady at large, and chose to be treated accordingly. Taking up a comfortable position in the alcove into which one steps through the glass doors of the bow window, she sat down on a particularly comfortable bench to wait patiently for her interview—so patiently that she presently went off to sleep, and so lost every word of a conversation that would have been exceedingly interesting to her, as bearing upon the present whereabouts of the Doyles.

"So you've turned off that foreign

fellow of yours," said Lawrence, entering the library with Ralph. "Why, when he turned out not guilty, after all?"

"My dear fellow, some people's innocence is less satisfactory than other people's guilt. Chaff as much as you like, but it's all of a piece with my letting a proved thief go."

"Chaff upon Don Quixote was always thrown away."

"And what's the news from town?"

"Nothing. For excitement one must come to Lincolnshire. But I have just one bit of news by the way. Do you remember a girl that was staying here lately—the archdeacon's daughter, you know? Well, I always thought that girl was as queer as her father. She's gone on the stage."

"Phoebe Doyle gone on the stage?"

"Yes; and it's my belief she's been there before. People don't act like that who haven't been on the boards before. A painter I know a little of—Esdaile, you know—is painting her portrait. I was in his studio the other day and saw it on an easel. He said it was an actress—a Miss Vernon—not known to London fame, but no doubt the provinces knew her well. I didn't say she had an alias in private life, because I never tell tales out of school, except to you. I only asked if Vernon was a real name or a stage name, and Esdaile didn't know. Somehow the talk turned off just then; but if I'm not on the heels of the great Doyle mystery, I'm no better than a detective from Scotland Yard."

"Well, much good may the great Doyle mystery do you; she's none the worse for being an actress, I suppose?"

"No, I suppose not much. But it makes her easier to know. So she's all the better, in that way. By Jove, Bassett, I believe there isn't a stone the archdeacon wouldn't skin, if it weren't his own flesh and blood—which it is—to turn a penny. If he makes his daughter nothing worse than an actress, he's a better fellow than I take him for."

"And by Jove, Lawrence, one would think you were hit to hear the way you go on about those Doyles. The girl's a nice girl, and Vernon sounds as well as Doyle, any day. My father isn't the fellow to drop old acquaintance as long as he knows nothing bad about them, and it's quite clear your suspicions of his wanting to sponge were absurd. I don't suppose we're likely to see much of the family again."

"I shall though. Wherever Miss Vernon comes out I shall have the entrée of that theatre, you may be sure. And I flatter myself that I know the way to the heart of an actress pretty well. I object to the archdeacon as a man, but as a father-in-law not at all. I must marry money, Bassett, and settle down."

"You are a——"

"Poor devil, Bassett; and you're a rich one. I should like to know what ten thousand a year means."

"And upon my soul, Lawrence, I should like for once to know what it means to have nothing a year. I want to know what it feels like to be tempted to marry for money, like you, or to steal, like that poor devil of an engineer. One ought to know how other people feel, if one doesn't mean to go through life like an Urquhart, who only thinks he knows, and thinks wrong."

"What infernal twaddle. You say you'd like to try it, because you're quite certain you'll never have to try, because you're doomed to be a rich man, whether you like it or no."

"A gentleman to see Sir Charles Bassett, sir," said a footman, just then entering. "Shall I show him in here?"

"I suppose so. Who is he? My father won't be back this hour."

"I said so, sir; but he said you'd do as well. His card's in this envelope, he asked me to say."

"He sends in his card in a closed envelope? Well, no doubt he has his reasons. But what the——"

Ralph always believed his own eyes, and they read upon the card these words: "Sir Rayner Bassett, Bart., Cautleigh Hall."

THE LIFE-BOAT IN THE EUXINE.

I MUST commence this article with a quotation, which, even if it be somewhat hackneyed, is so material to my subject that I must employ it. Lord Byron, who loved the sea in all its aspects, but especially when it was most dangerous, has written this of the Black Sea:

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
Broke, foaming o'er the blue Symplegades;
'Twas a grand sight from off the Giant's Grave
To watch the progress of those rolling seas
Between the Bosphorus, as they lash and lave
Europe and Asia—you being quite at ease.

It is obvious that Lord Byron, when he wrote these lines, was mindful of his old training at Harrow, and that he had in

view the dictum of Lucretius, which I will give in the words of Creech.

'Tis pleasant, when the seas are rough, to stand
And view another's danger—safe on land.
Not 'cause he's troubled; but 'tis sweet to see
Those cares and fears, from which ourselves are
free!

The point from which Lord Byron viewed the breakers of the Euxine, is a hill, of from four hundred to five hundred feet in height, on the Asiatic shore of the Upper Bosphorus. It has long been called the Giant's Mountain, and Lord Byron calls it the Giant's Grave, because there is upon it an old barrow, or tumulus, which is hallowed by many time-honoured traditions. By some authors the barrow has been called the tomb of Hercules; by others it has been assigned to Amycus, King of the Bebryces, who was killed by the Argonauts, when they were on their way to their gold-washing expedition in Colchis. About three hundred years ago the Turks, who have a remarkable capacity for the discovery of the incredible, discovered that the tumulus was the tomb of Joshua, who had been sent by Moses to fight against the pagans in Roumelia, and had died on his return from his campaign. Having made this discovery the Turks built round the tomb a convent (Teke) of dervishes, which still exists, and which is as sacred to the Mahometans, and as lucrative to the dervishes, as if Joshua had been a Mahometan. Thither come young Turkish maidens, who cannot utter the love which they feel, but who hope that for a small fee the holy Joshua will turn the thoughts of the youths of their choice towards them. Thither, too, come matrons, who seek to reclaim the wandering affections of their lords, or who are aspirants for the cares and honours of maternity. All pay fees to the keepers of the tomb, and all suspend fragments of their garments to the windows and walls of the mausoleum. A lamp burns always at the head of the tomb, and makes the nearest approach in its power to the "eternal but unseen" sepulchral lamps of the ancients.

I do not pretend to know to whom the tomb really belongs, but I confess that I do not think it belongs to Joshua. As I look out upon it to-day, however, I see that it is thickly covered with snow, and I know that if Lord Byron had stood there in the present year, he would have witnessed the very utmost fury of the sea which he so much admired. For, during the week which ended on the fourth of February, a gale which had the force of a

hurricane, and was accompanied by a blinding storm of snow, raged in the Black Sea. One large English steamer, which was coming down from Sebastopol, laden with grain, foundered far from shore, and her cargo and her crew are being gradually washed ashore. At the time at which I write these lines nine bodies have been washed ashore and buried; some planks of the broken vessel have been recovered; and a quantity of the grain which she is supposed to have contained has been collected by the hungry villagers of the European shore of the Black Sea. But at least as many more bodies have to be accounted for, and it seems absolutely certain that the entire crew have perished, and that not one man remains who can say whether the ship was deck-laden, or whether, as her cargo consisted of grain, it was a shifting cargo. From the condition in which her cargo came on shore it is to be feared that it was a shifting cargo, and I am bound to state that, in my experience, the English shippers to and from the Black Sea have been reckless to the very verge of homicide.

Under these circumstances public attention has as a matter of course been attracted to the life-boat service in the Black Sea, and as I have had special access to information with regard to that service, I propose to devote a few pages to an account of it. I think it right to preface this account by a brief description of the district over which the life-boat service extends, and at the same time to state that during my seven years' residence in the close vicinity of the Black Sea, there has been only one gale of equal intensity. This occurred in April of 1878, and was marked by a tragedy to which I shall presently have to allude.

The passenger who, as he sails northwards, has taken his last look at the Giant's Grave, and who has passed the forts which have long been supposed to guard the upper mouth of the Bosphorus against Russia incursions, but which are now recognised as being utterly worthless, finds as he glides, or rolls, along between the blue Symplegades of Europe, and the equally blue Symplegades of Asia, that the European and Asiatic shores trend out in bold sweeping curves to the west, and to the east, and that he has entered into a region peopled by many memories. If the breakers of the Euxine be in a humour to permit him to reflect on anything but his own discomfort, he may well meditate on the feebleness of human ambition, and the

futility of human hopes. Anciently—that is, when the world was still a comely matron—no part of these European and Asiatic shores was devoid of its strong, populous, and fortified city; no headland was destitute of its temple; no rocky reef or sandy shoal was wanting in its votive or its warning monument. Now, all these remains of the early struggle of civilisation against barbarism have perished. It is the custom of those who are merely sciolists to ascribe the destruction of these ancient memorials to the Turks; but to those who study the subject with a view, not so much to politics as to philosophy, it is evident that the Turks have had little or nothing to do with the destruction of the ancient civilisation on either side of the Black Sea. The utmost fault that can be urged against them is that they have not repaired the ravages of the past. Their defence is that they found very little to repair. When the Turks acquired the mastery of this region, in the middle of the sixteenth century, there was but little left of the works to which the Roman and the Lower Roman Emperors had devoted so much toil and care and treasure. Successive waves of battle had swept over the districts, and as a matter of course had converted monuments into rubble and shingle. The Turks merely found the debris of a civilisation which they knew not how to replace. The great wall, which the Emperor Anastasius had stretched from Dercos on the Black Sea to Silivria on the Sea of Marmora, which was intended to protect the Peninsula of Constantinople against the incursions of the Huns, and which was in fact a sort of forerunner of the famous lines planned by Sir John Burgoyne, and afterwards by Baker Pacha, had fallen into ruin by the time of Justinian. Less than fifty years had been sufficient to make these earliest lines of Constantinople absolutely useless. My readers may be certain that, in these gradual disintegrations and degradations, Nature did not count for nothing. Much of the destruction which has gone on in and near Constantinople is unquestionably due to earthquakes, or to some other form of mysterious subterranean agency.

It is on record that between the year 395 and the year 1453, which was the year of the Turkish conquests, there were no fewer than ninety earthquakes in the Byzantine Empire, the greater part of which occurred in the region which extends from the Dardanelles to the Black Sea. Of these

some had details which may deserve mention. For instance, in the year 438 A.D., there was a terrible earthquake in Constantinople which lasted for four months. I merely note, to show my readers what was priestly excitement in those times, that according to priestly chronicles, during the time of the earthquake, a young man who had been “lifted up into the air,” heard a divine voice which ordered that the Trisagion should be sung, “without addition,” which was accordingly done by “Prochus,” “Pulcheria,” and “Theodosius the Second,” and was, of course, a concession to the crazes of the Greek Church. The marvelously strong walls of Constantinople, the solid foundations of Saint Sophia, the “Seven Towers,” and many other ancient edifices, have more than once been shaken and almost shattered by earthquakes. Very shortly after the earthquake to which I have alluded, the people, in the reign of Justinian, were alarmed by another earthquake, and then insisted that the Trisagion should be chanted “with the addition,” and that the decree of the Council of Chalcedon should be set aside.

A more comical effect of an earthquake occurred in the year 549, when an enormous whale, or at least a cetacean, which had inhabited the Marmora, the Bosphorus, and the Black Sea for fifty years, and had been the terror of the imperial ladies when they went out in their gilded caiques, was thrown up and stranded in the river Sangaris near to Ismidt, and was there killed. The poor animal had attained to the dignity of a name. He was called “Porphyria,” and is mentioned by more than one historian.

Nor are there wanting indications at the present moment that still, in the ashes of this old region of the earth there “live their wonted fires.” At the present moment volcanic smoke is seen to be ascending from fissures on the European shore of the Black Sea at about twenty-five miles’ distance from Constantinople.

This baby volcano has been in existence for about eighteen months, but nobody paid much attention to it until quite recently, when an English party, attracted by the smoke, went to the fissures, and with some labour dug round about them. They were soon compelled to desist by the heat of the ground, and by the sulphurous fumes which had covered all the neighbouring bushes and turf with a yellow efflorescence.

The villagers in the neighbourhood state that these appearances commenced close to

the sea-shore, but they have now spread much further inland. Still, I do not believe that anyone in Constantinople, with the exception of the few Englishmen to whom I allude, is aware of their existence. It is said, indeed, that a Turkish officer who was in command in the district, endeavoured to put the volcano out by pouring a few buckets of water into one of the fissures, but of course his labours were as efficacious as were the struggles of Mrs. Partington with her mop against the Atlantic. Moreover, the whole region abounds in evidences of the physical convulsions which of old distressed, and may again distress it. The European and the Asiatic Symplegades, or Cyanean Rocks, are merely the remains of a barrier, through which the Black Sea, weary of being a northern lake, broke and joined its waters to those of the Mediterranean.

The early union of the opposing coasts is obvious. The seams of lignite which extend for many miles along the European shore correspond with analogous seams on the Asiatic shore, and possibly indicate the existence of a true coal-field on either side of, and under, the Black Sea. The Flora and the Fauna on either shore are identical.

A French officer who was attached to the French Embassy at the commencement of the present century, noted the efflorescence of sulphur near to Sara Yeri, in what is now called the "Valley of Chestnuts, and also saw the debris of lava, and ascribes the name "Sara Yeri," which means yellow soil, to the presence of sulphurous efflorescence.

Olivier and Choiseul-Gouffier have placed near Bouyukderé, which is in the district that I am describing, a large volcano, which in their opinion opened the way for the passage of the Black Sea into the western waters. At all events it is certain that within the historical period, the Sea of Marmora, which was a calm and tranquil sea, has, probably through the incursion of the Black Sea, become occasionally turbulent.

This, we may reasonably assume, is due to the malefic action of Russia against the western nations. The waves are taking the place of the Huns, the Alans, and the Getæ, and are descending upon Western Europe. The Thracian coast can never, within the historical period, have been the "place in which to spend a happy day." The harpies have disappeared, unless, as some think, the harpies were

locusts, in which case they have left to Thrace a vast progeny of descendants. The lions, which, in the days of Herodotus were the terror of the district, have also disappeared, but jackals and wolves abound along the coast, and bark and howl as in that far distant but not more inclement region,

Where the wolf howls on Oonashka's shore !

The human inhabitants are very much what they have been from time immemorial. They are no longer pagans, but they are still polygamists. We are told that of old they were wont to purchase their wives, and sell their daughters, and at the present time their matrimonial arrangements are conducted much on the same principle. The practice which prevailed amongst them of killing a man's favourite wife by the side of his grave has vanished, but the practice of "wrecking," which existed in the days of Herodotus, and which was also noted by Pierre Gilles (Gyllicus) in the sixteenth century, endured down to the date of the establishment of the Black Sea life-boat service. For many centuries the hanging out of false signals to allure mariners to the rocks was to them a congenial occupation.

Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that Thracian parents were apt to take a melancholy view of human existence, and were distinctly of opinion that "life is not worth living." Our own Cowper, borrowing from Herodotus, has thus described their views and practices :

Thracian parents at his birth
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But, with undissembled mirth
Lay him breathless on his bier.
Greece and Rome with equal scorn,
Oh ! the savages ! exclaim ;
Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name.
But the cause of this concern,
And this pleasure would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

The Byzantine Bishop of Derkos, whose diocese extended from Derkos on the Black Sea as far as Silivria on the Marmora, can scarcely have enjoyed his position in this nation of "Mallocks." However, he was released from this position by the Turks, who at the Conquest said : "Let his bishopric another take !" His place knows him no more ; and even the chapel of Our Lady of Chestnuts, which stood in the valley of that name, and in which he may often have officiated, is as extinct as the "Temple of Venus Meretricia," which it replaced. There are two relics of the not

very remote past, which are worthy of mention. The first is a ruined castle which was built by the Genoese in the decadence of the Lower Empire, and which has erroneously been christened the "Tower of Ovid," who never came near to it, and whose place of exile and death has been identified with Kustendji. The other relic is a fine bronze cannon, which lies neglected on the shore at Kara Bournon. It is in perfect preservation, and bears an easily legible inscription, giving the name of the founder, which was Aimassius; the date of casting, which was 1597, and the name of Sigismund Bathory, Prince of Transylvania, by whom—or by Bethlem Gabor—it was probably brought into Thrace, when Protestant Germany was allied with Mussulman Turkey against Catholic Austria. These two relics of the dissensions of the Christians fitly match each other, and help to show how deeply the Moslems are indebted for their success to the internecine feuds of Christianity. Well might the Genoese, Jean Paul Marina, write thus in his once famous and popular Turkish Spy, "I have been," says he, "to a ceremony which I am willing to see often so as to give an account of it in my letters. It is the Te Deum, which Christian princes cause to be sung in their churches on gaining any considerable advantage over their enemies; which Te Deum was composed by two of their most famous saints—Ambrose and Austin. When the French beat the Spaniards, they sing the Te Deum; and when the Spaniards beat the French, they do the like. These nations do the duty of the Mussulman in destroying one another, and when they have done give thanks to God for the evil which they have committed."

As I have stated, the inhabitants of the Thracian coast were professional "wreckers" from the time of Herodotus to the establishment of the life-boat service, which took place about twelve years ago, and but for the life-boat service they would be wreckers still. As it has robbed them of their ill-gotten gains they regard it with considerable disfavour, and will not render any assistance to its operations. They will not help to launch the boats; they will afford no aid to the shipwrecked mariners who manage to reach the shore; and when they can do so unobserved they will complete the catastrophe which the sea has begun; and they will boldly steal any flotsam and jetsam which may be thrown up by the sea. They have in-

herited all the ferocity of their ancestors. About three years ago, a party of them set upon eight Greek pedlars, who were plying their calling along the coast; plundered them and murdered them to a man. The graves of these unfortunate victims are still visible among the bay-trees and scrub at Aghaschli.

Nor are their neighbours on the Asiatic shore less murderously inclined. Within three days of the time at which I write, two English naval officers, who were shooting at Artaki on the Asiatic shore of the Marmora, were attacked by a party of fifteen shepherds; beaten, bound, and wounded. They were ultimately rescued by the timely interposition of Mr. Wrench, the British Consul, who was also shooting in the neighbourhood. Of these two officers, Captain Grenfell, of the Falcon, was not seriously wounded, but Captain Selby, of the Cockatrice, who had previously distinguished himself by bringing an immense number of refugees in the Torch from the coast of the Black Sea during the war, had his skull completely split open by a blow from a hatchet and afterwards died. This is Anatolian gratitude.

Against all the difficulties of their position, which are aggravated by the fact that the Turkish Government has never contributed anything more than the dead weight of Turkish obstruction to the enterprise, the officers and men of the life-boat service have struggled persistently and patiently, and have saved an incredible number of lives and much property. Of course their labours have not always been crowned by success. The shore is strewn with what may be called the bones of many vessels, which are rapidly being broken up by the peasantry for fuel. But even in these cases most of the crews were saved. Sometimes, however, when these efforts have been most successful, they have been rewarded with but scant gratitude even from Europeans.

In the month of April, 1880, the Austrian Lloyd steamship Niobe went ashore at Kilios. Captain Palmer, who is the chief officer on the European shore, immediately launched his life-boat, and boarded the steamer, which was a fine and valuable vessel. The Austrian captain retreated to his cabin, and would neither render assistance nor give orders. While Captain Palmer's men were towing the anchor of the Niobe into position, her own crew were packing up their traps and quarrelling amongst themselves. While this was going

on, Captain Palmer observed another fine ship of the Austrian Lloyd Company, the Achilles, bearing down upon the same shoal. He sent one of his own officers in his own boat to warn her, and succeeded in saving her from running aground. In the meanwhile he had got the Niobe afloat by lightening her of fifty tons of coal, which he and his men with great efforts threw overboard. The Austrian captain was very angry with him for this necessary exertion, for the captains of the Austrian Lloyd Company are strictly limited in their expenditure of coal, and consequently always steam as slowly as they can. Nevertheless, though the Austrian captain lost his coal, Captain Palmer saved two fine ships for the captain's employers.

And, my readers will ask, what was the result of this? Why the result was that the Austrian captain wrote a violent letter to a local paper against Captain Palmer, to which Palmer sent a triumphant reply.

Having given you an instance of Anatolian gratitude, I think it right to give you this specimen of Austrian gratitude. I must add that the poor passengers on board the Niobe and the Achilles, about whom, as a matter of course, the officers of the ships did not in the least trouble themselves, were warm in their thanks to Captain Palmer for his skill.

The life-boat service of the Euxine is provided with four fine boats of twelve tons each, two for the European and two for the Asiatic coast, with two principal stations, one for each coast, and with a long line on either coast of rocket-stations and refuges. The principal station on the European side is connected with the capital by telephone, and it is highly desirable that it should be connected in the same manner with its subordinate stations. Much time is lost at critical moments for want of this connection, as appeals for extra assistance have to be sent by hand, and as they usually require to be sent on tempestuous nights and over a bad and dark road—if indeed it can be called a road—much valuable time is wasted and the fatigue of the men greatly increased. The expense of putting all the stations in telephonic communication would not be great, and the advantage to international commerce would be incalculable. The equipage consists of two principal officers—Captain Palmer on the European, and Captain Somers on the Asiatic shore, and of fifty men on either coast.

The men are all natives, either Turks or Lazes, and their intelligence, diligence, good-humour, and bravery are beyond all praise, and furnish one more proof of the superiority of the Turkish population to the Turkish Government. Between the Turkish peasant and the Turkish pacha the difference is vast. The one has the soul of a prince in the garb of a pauper, the other has the soul of a lacquey in the trappings of a lord.

It is needless for me to enter into the details of the service; you are familiar with them in England. The only difference is that in England the inhabitants of the coasts are willing to assist the crews, and that here the crews are wholly unaided. But they are well-drilled, and get through their work with marvellous rapidity. They launch their heavy boats down an incline of thirty yards, and through a boiling surf in about seven minutes. Their rocket-practice is equally good, but this is less surprising, as the Turks are a nation of marksmen. The Turks have also a great sense of humour, and they gratify it when they are called out for "recovery drill," which is enacted with strict attention to the necessary rules. When they have extracted the supposed shipwrecked mariner from the "Breeches Buoy," and have stretched him on the beach, or on the floor of the refuge, they proceed to manipulate him, *secundum artem*, he all the while pretending to be past recovery. After a while growing weary of his mirth-provoking obstinacy, one of them will administer a hearty slap to him, or apply a bottle of strong smelling-salts to his nose, and either comedy produces an instantaneous recovery. The men are poorly paid for the risks which they undergo, but they are comfortably housed, and fairly cared for, and as they are all well armed with Martini-Henry rifles, they can set the human breakers at defiance; those of the sea are more dangerous. Still they are cheerful and contented, and in their block-houses at night beguile the hours with extemporaneous dramatic exhibitions and with pantomimes, for both of which the Turks have a remarkable aptitude.

But I come now to a dark and painful incident in the history of the service, which, at the time of its occurrence, created a marked sensation amongst all humane men.

On the twenty-fourth of April, 1878, a gale of unprecedented violence occurred

in the Black Sea, and roused the life-boat crews on either shore to their utmost exertions. The present Captain Palmer was then in charge of the Asiatic coast, and his father was in charge of the European coast. On both sides many vessels went ashore, but the life-boats' crews were rewarded by the success of their efforts to save life and property in almost all cases. Towards the close of the work, however, Captain Palmer, senior, who was engaged in saving a large Turkish transport vessel, fell from her into the sea, and was hurled lifeless by the waves upon some rocks near to his own home. It was not until the following day that his son heard of the catastrophe. Application was made to the Turkish officer who was in charge of the district, to render assistance in recovering Captain Palmer's body from the rocks.

"What!" exclaimed the savage—"what, do you expect me to order my men to recover the carcase of a dead Giaour?"

And he turned his back scornfully on the applicants, and left the body of the man who had died in saving the lives and properties of the Turks, as a silent yet eloquent condemnation of a Turk's ingratitude.

The governing body of this excellent service is an international commission, but Mr. Wrench, H.M. Consul, is the "electromotor" of the commission, and is indefatigable in his exertions. Three or four years ago he devised an ingenious plan by which the hard-worked crews receive, at the most inclement season of the year, a small bonus upon their scanty wages. It has been arranged that every person who wishes to be absolved from the trouble of paying New Year's visits—which are de rigueur here—shall obtain exemption by paying one medjidie (about four shillings) to the Black Sea Life-boat Fund. This year this toll for the right to pass through conventional and complimentary turnpikes yielded nearly two hundred pounds. As a matter of course the names of those who have purchased immunity from a time-honoured but troublesome formality, are published in the local journals. The plan is one which might well be imitated elsewhere by all those who either take a general interest in the life-boat, or whose relatives and friends "go down to the sea in ships and see the wonders of the deep." If my old friend, Mr. Dibdin, be still at his post, I commend the plan to his attention.

THE SERJEANT'S BOOK.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

IN the days of the first Duke of Wellington whenever "the Duke" was mentioned everybody knew, without further explanation, who was meant. Other dukes might be referred to in their own immediate circles in that way, but for the public in general "the Duke" was always the Iron one and no other. Very much in the same way for a long period of time many and varied sets of widely differing society in London have had no difficulty in understanding who was meant by "the Serjeant." Other serjeants were well-known to the public: Serjeant Cox as a judge and Serjeant Parry as an advocate for instance: but "the Serjeant" was always Serjeant Ballantine and nobody else.

Very nearly fifty years have passed since the Serjeant was first introduced to his future companions at the bar at the Sessions House, Clerkenwell, joined the Central Criminal Court, and began to go the Home Circuit. During the whole of that long period, besides carrying on what grew in time to be a very large and important practice, he has moved in all sorts of London life, by no means giving himself up to "shop," but keenly observant of the men and manners about him, and cultivating with zest acquaintance and friendship with some of the most brilliant and notable men of his time. So that it is not surprising that he has plenty to tell, or that, being minded to set down his experiences in a book, he should have produced a couple of very interesting and amusing volumes.*

That the Serjeant's literary manner is as good as his matter cannot in strict truth be said, although he tells his stories with admirable point, and sets his views forth with praiseworthy plainness and directness. Very little of the care with which the writer would marshal his facts for a jury has been given to the arrangement of the book, while such matters as dates are conspicuous mainly by their absence. Indeed it may almost be said that of arrangement, from an editorial point of view, there is practically none. But a great part of the charm of the book is due to this very circumstance. To read it is like sitting down with a chatty friend who has got

* "Some Experiences of a Barrister's Life," by Serjeant Ballantine. London, R. Bentley & Son.

plenty to tell, and tells it well, and to whose reminiscences and comments one is content to listen, as they suggest themselves to him in the odd way in which, under such circumstances, one's memory is apt to stray here and there without any regard to chronological sequence. And if there be readers inclined to quarrel with the desultory nature of the serjeant's style, his naïve and frank apology for his own literary shortcomings must surely disarm them at once. "I believe my mind is naturally of an irregular type," he says in a kind of preface, which, characteristically enough, has found its place in the middle of the second volume, "the circumstances that come into it during the progress of my work refuse to maintain any order, and defy every endeavour to preserve the dates . . . but if I did contrive to write a book orderly, and in accordance with rule, my identity would be lost, and so if my details are confusing I must throw myself upon the mercy of my readers, and ask them to pity my infirmities."

Serjeant Ballantine was bred for the bar. His father, who had originally been in the army, was a barrister, and lived for some time in Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, and was afterwards the magistrate at the Thames Police Office—police courts were called offices in those days—so that the embryo barrister was from the very first surrounded by a legal atmosphere, and took to the law as naturally as a duck takes to the water. And it is a curious coincidence, in view of the interest which he afterwards came to take in the dramatic art, that he should have been for a time educated at a school kept by a Mr. Wigan, whose nephews, Alfred and Horace, both since distinguished on the stage, were his fellow pupils.

For some four or five years before that, young Ballantine had had painful experience of public school life as a day-scholar at St. Paul's School. One of the commonest feelings, in reading autobiographies which have to do with the earlier decades of the present century, is the sense of the extraordinary gulf which divided those times from these. Surely at hardly any other period in the history of this country can there have been so great a difference as the last fifty or sixty years has shown. Nowadays when a board-school teacher is at all severe in the matter of personal chastisement, it is as likely as not that the nearest sitting magistrate is called upon to interfere. Towards the end of the first quarter of the century the three assistant-masters at

St. Paul's School, with whom young Ballantine had to do, were all, according to the Serjeant's book, cruel, cold-blooded, unsympathetic tyrants, who flogged the boys continually and with enjoyment of the tortures they inflicted. To stand over a boy with flushed, angry face, thrashing away until compelled by sheer fatigue to stop; to cane the finger-tips of the boys as they came, cold and gloveless, into school on a winter's morning; to throw dictionaries at a culprit's head; these were among the exercises in which these amiable gentlemen delighted. No wonder that they were as much hated as they were feared, and that they did not succeed in turning out any very distinguished pupils. It seems almost impossible that the admirably-conducted St. Paul's School of to-day can possibly be the lineal successor of such a place as that here described.

But it was not only in the matter of scholastic discipline that the manners and customs of those times differed widely from ours. The Serjeant has lived to see an almost complete metamorphosis of the London and Londoners that he once knew, and of the system of the administration of the law with which he started in life but little has survived the journey. Barristers were supposed to be made in those days by eating a certain number of dinners, and by being turned loose in a pleader's chambers to browse upon such legal fare as might crop up. The era of examinations was not yet. When a batch of young men had fulfilled the modest requirements of the time they were summoned to the bench table and presented with a glass of wine apiece, and after being addressed by the treasurer in a speech full of good advice, blossomed forth into full-grown barristers. The Serjeant tells a good story of one of these, who had to return thanks for his fellows, and who, whether owing to a cynical turn of mind or to inadvertence, finished by expressing his regret that none of those who had wished them success were likely to live to see it.

Serjeant Ballantine was called to the bar, as he reminds us, in the days when London was lighted by oil-lamps, and guarded by "Charlies," and Bow Street runners. Omnibuses and cabs were not yet invented—"and I have lived to see an Archbishop in a hansom cab!" writes the Serjeant—and the only public vehicles were the hackney coach and the glass coach, which latter differed from the hackney

coach inasmuch as it did not smell so much of straw, "and the driver at some period or other may have washed himself." Bishops were to be seen in the streets "in white wigs, surmounted by a three-cornered hat called a shovel, a long silk apron, knee-breeches, and silk stockings"—one cannot help wondering whether there were any street boys in those days, and if so, how they managed to resist the temptation of guying the right reverend prelates. There were few theatres, and of those which did exist, the saloons could not be entered by decent people; drunkenness was almost universal; public gambling-houses swarmed in certain quarters of the town; places of public entertainment, many of them the scenes of the coarsest vice, were open at all hours of the night; "pugilism, treated as a noble English institution, created an atmosphere of coarseness and slang, and even in private society toasts were given and conversation was tolerated that would now shock the least refined." This is not a pretty picture, and it is certain that matters have improved very much since then, and, although the condition of Waterloo Place and the lower end of Regent Street at night are still not very much better than they were as the Serjeant remembers them many years ago, the shameful saloons and places of that class which disgraced the neighbourhood have been to all intents and purposes swept away. There were few magazines and reviews, and still fewer newspapers. The Times cost sevenpence, and five o'clock was a fashionable dinner hour. "A restaurant had never been heard of, and would probably have been denounced as savouring of Bonaparte. A la mode-beef shops and eating-houses of different grades, but of little pretensions, furnished the entertainment necessary to those who could not enjoy the domestic dinner." One seems to be reading of times far too remote to have had anything in common with the times of our fathers.

In matters legal, as well as social, the changes since the Serjeant first began to practise have been almost as great. Justice was in those days undoubtedly slower than now, and its machinery more cumbrous to set in motion, though whether it was more expensive, as the Serjeant opines, may be a moot point. There were no county courts. Flagrant injustice was continually done in such places as the Palace Court and the Courts of Request. Imprisonment for debt existed in its worst form. Officers of the sheriff robbed creditors and debtors with

perfect impartiality. Great taxes were imposed upon legal proceedings by sinecure officers, the fees for which came out of the pockets of suitors, and in the smaller courts many of the officers were systematically bought and sold.

"Police magistrates," the Serjeant says, "might be costermongers; Sir Richard Birnie, the chief magistrate, was, I believe, a saddler." Serjeant Ballantine's father was, it has been mentioned, the magistrate at the Thames Police Office, and had for his colleague an old sea-captain, it being thought "that the experiences of navigating a ship on the sea would be a good preparation for administering the law in connection with the river." Appointments were systematically made without the smallest reference to the qualifications of the men who were lucky enough to get them. Thus, for instance, Charles Phillipp was, after the Courvoisier case which proved so disastrous to his reputation, appointed to be one of the judges of the old Insolvent Court, "which required a good knowledge of figures, about which he knew nothing; and his colleague, who knew little more, was a gentleman notoriously more insolvent than most of the suitors who sought relief at his hands." Patronage is probably not always exercised even now with strict justice and wisdom, but jobs of this sort could scarcely occur. Altogether it is not too much to say that the whole of our legal system has been revolutionised during the years of which the Serjeant treats.

The Serjeant was called to the bar in June, 1834, and the beginning of his career was not altogether prophetic of a brilliant future. It may be that he did not trouble himself with much work—indeed, he tells us that he did not burn much midnight oil—but, whatever the cause, his first three years at the bar were not productive of a large harvest of fees. Four guineas and a half in the first year could not be called encouraging, and although this modest income rose in the second year to thirty guineas, and in the third to seventy-five, even that was a long way off an assured success. In his fourth year he obtained a revising barristership, his colleague being Mr. Shee (afterwards a judge of the Queen's Bench), and the remuneration, though not large, was very useful during the next four years, when the number of such appointments was diminished and the last appointed were disestablished.

The Serjeant gives an amusing account

of some of his troubles during his early days in Inner Temple Lane, where he shared the services of a laundress with half-a-dozen other young barristers, and employed a mischievous little urchin, who cleaned his boots and was called his clerk. "I possessed one confiding tradesman," he tells us. "His name was Gill; he lived close by in Essex Court, and fortunately for me, dealt in almost every article. . . . Gill was my resource for everything, from pats of butter to blacking. At last, after long suffering, he struck, shaking his head when I told him of the clients I expected. On the afternoon after this event, I was balancing myself upon my three-legged chair in melancholy mood, and wondering whence my dinner would come, when a knock sounded at my door, and a clerk from Messrs. Gilby and Allen—blessed be their names!—brought me, and paid for, three half-guinea motions. With this mine of wealth in my pocket, I determined to enjoy myself luxuriously, and accordingly went to Hancock's. . . . The glorious repast still remains imbedded in my memory—twice of saddle of mutton; I am afraid to say how many helps of jam-tart." After this banquet twenty-five shillings were left, with which the young barrister tried his luck in a Leicester Square gambling-house. Fortune smiled upon him. He left the place with thirty-five pounds in his pocket, and the long-suffering Gill was made happy.

It was at the Middlesex Sessions that his first forensic display was made, and, again by an odd coincidence, in a theatrical case. It was not one of great importance, being, in fact, nothing but an application for the renewal of the licence of the Garrick Theatre in Leman Street, Whitechapel, then under the management of Mr. Conquest, afterwards of the Eagle Tavern and Grecian Theatre in the City Road, nor was the fee magnificent. But the half-guinea was "the sweetest that ever found its way into my pocket," and the importance of the occasion was so great to the budding barrister, that, when he rose, he could see nothing; the court seemed to turn round and the floor to be sinking. "I cannot tell what I asked," says the Serjeant, "but it was graciously granted by the Bench." It was long before he gained sufficient self-possession to address the court with any amount of confidence, and many a young man who is smarting under the sense of a first failure may be encouraged by this expression of opinion: "I do not

think that glibness and self-confidence exhibited early in court are a good augury for ultimate success. No one, until he has measured himself with others, has a right to form a high opinion of himself. It is true that after a young barrister has ejaculated with difficulty a few incoherent words, he sits down with a parched throat, and a sort of sickening feeling that he will never succeed; but the most successful of advocates have experienced these sensations, and to this day I believe that many rise to conduct cases of importance with some of their old emotions."

Although the first case of much importance in which young Ballantine was concerned was in the House of Lords, the Middlesex Sessions, the Home Circuit, and the Central Criminal Court saw most of his first hard work. His opinion of the Middlesex magistrates, at all events upon the day for granting music and dancing licences, is far from flattering. "A certain section of these gentlemen, none of them of position or note, opposed the grant to any of the applicants. A homily upon morals, the profanity of music, the indecency of dancing, and the length of ladies' dresses, formed the staple of their orations. Broad views upon what may fairly be deemed an important social question could not be expected from the speakers, and certainly never made their appearance. As far as I have been able to judge, assuming the perfect honesty of their worships, they betrayed simply a narrow-minded, unreasoning bigotry." The Serjeant's view that these matters should be made subject to police regulation will commend itself to most people.

Of the manner in which the business of the Central Criminal Court (or Central Court, as he always calls it) was conducted the Serjeant has little that is good to say. That the Common Serjeant and Commissioners should be elected after "a canvass amongst a parcel of by no means the highest class of tradesmen, who were quite incompetent to form a judgment," does not agree with his views of the fitness of things, nor is he quite satisfied that the Recorder should be elected by the Court of Aldermen. Somehow or another, however, very able men have generally been appointed to the latter office. In the days of which the Serjeant writes, the criminal courts at the Old Bailey sat from nine in the morning to nine in the evening, with relays of judges. Dinner was provided at three o'clock and at five, the

Ordinary of Newgate dining on both occasions, and the scenes in the evening—in those days people drank hard both with and after dinner—"may be imagined," the Serjeant dryly says. "There was much genial hospitality exercised towards the bar, and the junior members were given frequent opportunities of meeting the judges and other people of position; but one cannot but look back with a feeling of disgust to the mode in which eating and drinking, transporting and hanging, were shuffled together." All this is changed now, but survived to some extent up to within, comparatively speaking, a very few years ago. The present writer recollects very well dining at an Old Bailey dinner with a friend, a member of the bar, some twenty years back, when the Ordinary was summoned away from carving a goose because the "jury in the murder case was coming back," and when some of us left the table for the bench to hear the verdict, the sentence, and the Ordinary's sonorous "Amen," returning afterwards to finish our dinners as if nothing had happened—at least, so it was with the more seasoned vessels. The unaccustomed visitors did not get over it so pleasantly.

The manner in which business was carried on in the Central Court, when the Serjeant first joined the bar, certainly "made it a term of opprobrium to be called an Old Bailey barrister;" but of two at least of the City's judges a good account is given. Thus the Hon. Charles Ewan Law, the Recorder, "possessed ability quite equal to the necessities of his office," and was "dignified in manner before dinner always"—significant reservation!—and although Mirehouse, the Common Serjeant, is said to have turned his court into a low-comedy theatre, nothing worse is recorded of Arabin, the Commissioner, than that he enunciated absurdities with most perfect innocence, and that he once said to a jury, speaking of the inhabitants of Uxbridge: "I assure you, gentlemen, they will steal the very teeth out of your mouth as you walk through the streets. I know it from experience!"

At that time the leading counsel at the Old Bailey were Charles Philipps and Adolphus, the former of whom is best remembered by the extraordinary proceedings in connection with the case of Courvoisier. Both learned gentlemen must have given the judges plenty of trouble. Sir James Scarlett, then Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench, was once moved to

rebuke Mr. Adolphus from the Bench with the remark, "We are not now at the Old Bailey;" to be met with the retort: "No; for there the judge presides, and not the counsel." And Philipps, it is recorded, once laid himself open to a merciless attack from Brougham in one of the first cases in which he appeared in the Court of Queen's Bench. Brougham could hit hard when he liked, and so hard did he hit in this particular case that Philipps collapsed, and very seldom appeared again in the civil courts. Of the rivalry between these two men the Serjeant tells a good story. Said Adolphus, who was extremely irritable, and the greater part of whose business had passed into Philipps's hands, "You remind me of three Bs.—Blarney, Bully, and Bluster." "Ah," replied Philipps, "you never complained of my Bs. until they began to suck your honey."

Philipps's conduct of the defence of Courvoisier lost him his position at the bar, and there can be no doubt that he acted with great impropriety, although the difficult position in which he suddenly found himself placed may certainly be pleaded in extenuation. After the trial had proceeded for two days some most important evidence in favour of the prosecution suddenly turned up, and Courvoisier, sending for his counsel, admitted its correctness, and, by implication if not in direct words, his guilt. Notwithstanding this, however, Philipps in the course of an eloquent speech allowed himself to use such expressions as this: "Supposing him to be guilty of the murder, which is known to Almighty God alone," and others of a like import, which Serjeant Ballantine justly stigmatises as being offensive to good taste and barely escaping conveying a positive falsehood. It has commonly been imputed to Philipps that, notwithstanding the dreadful knowledge he possessed, he endeavoured to throw suspicion on a servant-maid, but it is satisfactory to find that, in the Serjeant's opinion, there is no ground for this accusation.

It is in reference to this case that the Serjeant lays it down as an axiom that "it is of the essence of advocacy that counsel should under no circumstances convey his own belief, or use expressions calculated to do so," and later he denounces as an "extremely unprofessional proceeding" a declaration of Sir John (afterwards Lord) Campbell in the case of Lord Melbourne and Mr. Norton, that his client,

Lord Melbourne, solemnly and upon his honour declared his innocence. "Most clients would do the same if they could find counsel who would lend themselves to repeating the assertion," is the Serjeant's pithy comment, and he returns to the point still later in commenting upon Serjeant Shee's defence of Palmer, when he was induced to express a personal belief that his client was innocent, and when "Lord Campbell," who tried the case, "did not check or reprove him, probably having Lord Melbourne's case in his recollection, and not wishing to be reminded of it." It is easy even for the non-legal mind to see how inconvenient this near identification of client and counsel must necessarily be.

Of the other Old Bailey barristers described by the Serjeant, perhaps William Clarkson and Charles Wilkins most nearly answer to the common view of the genus, the former especially. "Loud-voiced and swaggering, with one undeviating form of cross-examination, whatever might be the position or character of the witness, and that the very reverse of gentle or refined . . . by no means considerate to his juniors, but succumbed at once to those capable of resistance," is the Serjeant's unflattering portrait of him, which recalls Mr. Stryver and Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz forcibly to the mind. Wilkins, who succeeded Phillipps, appears to have owed most of his success to his fine sonorous voice and fluency of speech, as he is described as having been incapable of grasping the niceties of the law, and as being possessed of no readiness in dealing with any matter suddenly started, while repartee and ridicule were always fatal to him. Of this the Serjeant gives an amusing instance. Serjeant Wilkins was in a case in the Sheriffs' Court opposed to Serjeant Thomas, who was a terrible thorn in his side. Wilkins "looked as if he could have eaten his antagonist, and his voice was quite in keeping with his inflated oratory. Thomas arose when his time came, and, fixing his eyes upon his opponent, commenced in solemn tones with these words: "'And now the Hurly Burly's done'—" which altogether discomfited his opponent, who incontinently left the court. Of Thomas, the Serjeant also has a good story: "He having moved for a writ of nolle Prosequi instead of nolle Prosequi, 'Pray,' said the judge, 'do not make anything unnecessarily long on the last day of term.'"

It was in 1856, after a long and varied

experience at the bar, that Mr. Ballantine, on the recommendation of Sir John Jervis, was created a Serjeant-at-law by Lord Cranworth, and duly elected to the inn attached to the society. For some reason he was unable to obtain a patent of precedence from Lord Chelmsford, and it was not until some time afterwards that he was granted one by Lord Westbury. The office of Serjeant-at-law has gone the way of many other most respectable institutions, the property of the inn has been divided among its members, and when the present Serjeants are gone, the whole thing will be relegated to the region of dusty tradition. It is unnecessary, therefore, to dwell in this place upon the peculiar functions or position of a Serjeant-at-law, a full account of which may be found in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* of November, 1877, by Serjeant Pulling. One thing is clearly apparent, that the distinguished body understood the art of dining cheerfully and pleasantly in hall, and could quite appreciate generous old wine, and that their domestic arrangements, if we may so call them, flourished exceedingly under the treasurership of Serjeant Ballantine, which lasted from 1872 to 1877, with a brief interregnum during his absence in India in 1875.

Here we must break off these notes—which have grown to be almost as discursive as the book itself—to resume our journey under Serjeant Ballantine's cheery and chatty guidance next week.

THE BATTLE OF PORTSDOWN HILL.

DON'T you remember sweet Alice, Master Ben—the pretty girl with the wonderful chignon, with whom you flirted, Heaven knows how many years ago, as you drank her papa's claret in Regency Square; or how many times you danced with her at the Volunteer Ball; or how you madly proposed to her in the King's Road, while the band was playing, and the sea making music among the shingles?—all of which events happened at the Brighton Review in question, at a date which shall be left indefinite. Of the fate of Alice I am ignorant, except that she did not marry Ben, while I met that once lively youth the other day, still in full marching order, still a full private in the somethingth Middlesex, still youthful, though a little grizzled, and full of the good time he was going to have among the stern realities of

war, bivouacking in barns and putting up in the casual wards of barracks.

"The idea is," explained Ben, who gave me to understand that this was a very different thing from the unscientific gatherings we used to have on the Brighton Downs, when we blazed away our powder happily, regardless of friend or foe, "the idea is—But look here," cried Ben, who is nothing if not archaeological, "here is a thing I found pasted into a local history."

And this was a slip cut from a Kentish newspaper of the year 18—, giving a description of a grand review by King George the Third of the volunteers in Mote Park, near Maidstone, with a full account of how they fired off a grand volley on his majesty's arrival, and then, with his majesty at their head, fell gallantly upon a most substantial and satisfactory banquet. The heart of the chronicler glows with patriotic pride as he records the deeds of these brave fellows—of the thousands of chickens, of the hams, of the stones' weight of beef, of the innumerable hogsheads of beer, of all the immense provender that vanished before the gallant host. And yet this was stern serious business. Napoleon was consul just then, in the flush of his great victories, all Europe at his feet, and only a clump of white sails, at the mercy of storm and tempest, to guard us from his innumerable legions; while now, as Ben very justly insists, in this age of luxury, and while the sky overhead is clear and calm, however clouded the political horizon maybe, we can find many thousand young fellows to march off across the wilds of Hampshire, content to rough it like soldiers on a soldier's simple fare.

Just then a bugle sounded and Ben was compelled to fall in, and presently I saw him march off with his column to the station, while the band played *Over the Garden Wall*, and all the loafers of the neighbourhood fell into martial order and accompanied the music with their sweet voices.

And after all Ben has not explained to me the idea that he began upon; however, it is not his exclusive property, but has been made known to the world through all the newspapers. This idea, a very uncomfortable one, is that an enemy has landed somewhere on the coast of Sussex, and has despatched a force to cut off Portsmouth, or at all events to make things unpleasant for that great naval arsenal. And the idea of Ben and his brother volunteers is that

all this must be put a stop to. And so I go to see Ben entrained (which is an unpleasant word suggesting being entombed, with the preliminaries of embalment), and the sight is a pleasant one, with the Sabbath stillness of the early morning outside, and under the glass roof the dark masses of volunteers, the horses whinnying and neighing, trains gliding off while their occupants do their level best in the way of cheering and shouting. Altogether one's mind becomes filled with martial ardour, and when Ben cries out cheerily in parting, "Come and see the fight," the spirit moves me to reply, "I will."

It is a lucky chance after all that drags me out of bed on a sweet spring morning, the mist still hanging about the railway, and men out with their flags, and fog-signals exploding; but with wonderfully soft effects of towers and houses, and the broad river with its own curling mists. And what pleasanter run than this as we pass Carshalton with its winding streams—perhaps there is only one stream, but many times repeated—and Sutton cheerfully perched upon the chalk, and Leatherhead, which over-nice people are beginning to write *Letherhed*, where the once sluggish Mole broadens out and ripples down from the nice old bridge with mellow-tinted houses clustered about? There is grandeur too about the massive outline of Box Hill, half-veiled in the soft morning mist, and passing Dorking you look back on the broad ridge of downs ancient and sad, with groves of dark yew and groups of juniper. Pleasant too is the quiet pastoral valley, with corn lands here and there and the ploughman at work with his team, and rooks hovering about the upturned soil; and Horsham, a nest of red houses crowned by a grey old tower with here and there a grey weathered roof of the thin lime-stone slabs that they call hereabouts *Horsham tiles*; a river, too, winding among green fields. Is there not a charm, too, about Pulborough that seems to dominate a reach of fat rich marshland, and a sheep fair actually going on, and rustics in smock frocks with bats under their arms standing and gazing? And presently the grand old walls of a ruin, a massive gateway, and a fine old farm-house that seems to have grown out of it, with a church spire that belongs to the group. And this ruined castle guards the pass that leads through the grand escarpment of the southern downs which here rise above us in majestic sweep,

while along their terraced flanks ploughmen drive their teams, the highest looking no bigger than mice. And here it seems as if we must plunge into the bowels of the earth; but no, the line somehow twists through, breaking off great chunks of the hill, where the pastures tower above us, peeping over chalk cliffs, and so we whirl past Amberley, and there surely is Arundel, a vision of delight, with its grand feudal pile rising like a dream from among the lowly cottages at its feet. Who would live turmoiled in the town if he might enjoy such pleasant sights as these?

But, after Arundel, we feel the melancholy of the sea flats, seamed with channels, where the tide has left its mark. And Chichester, too, which people about — with philological correctness, I fancy — call Church'ster; the place, whatever its advantages in the way of a tall cathedral spire, does not irresistibly call upon the passing traveller to stay. So that it is, after all, rather a relief to pass through Havant, where we catch a glimpse of Portsdown Hill, which is to be the scene of the fight.

The hill rises suddenly from the flats, all a greenish brown, its broad back dotted with moving lines, the red brick forts that break its contour looking on in grim silence upon the pigmy swarms about them. And from this point all the country side is in commotion; flags are waving in all the gardens, and the children are all happy in marching about with handkerchiefs tied upon sticks. As the train rumbles slowly on little boys run after us with bunches of hedge-flowers. "Chuck it up," cries a passenger, holding out his hand for a bouquet. "Yew cheek it down first," cries the lad, meaning coppers; his bucolic innocence and trust not, alas! in their first bloom.

All this time we are leaving the Portsdown Heights behind us, and presently lose sight of them altogether, as we cross the narrow channel which cuts off Portsmouth from the mainland, and crawl slowly towards the town. Presently the crawl becomes a standstill, and the more adventurous of us jump out and hurry forward on foot. All the world is in the streets, all the world is at the windows, banners are thick in the air, Venetian masts more frequent than the lamp-posts, triumphal arches spanning the road, with all the brightest sunshine and the highest good-humour. But not a volunteer to be seen. "Why no, in course," observed a

joyful tar, "aren't they all on the field o' battle?" But how to get to the field of battle? Well, there is a tramway, fortunately, that takes you part of the way, and the cars, though well loaded, have still room for an odd passenger, for thrifty Portsmouth knows the way well enough, and has the use of its legs, and is not going to pay a shilling for what costs only twopence on ordinary days. You may talk about streets and magnificent distances, and all the rest of it, but this traveller can conscientiously aver that this Portsmouth street, from one end to the other of it, is about the longest in the world. Long as it is, however, it is crammed with people, a jolly moving crowd, sailors and soldiers, and sun-browned Hampshire folk, each lad with his lass, and some with two or three.

Where the tramcar stops we are close to the lines which guard the channel we crossed just now in the train, green banks of earth now crowded with lookers-on, but with a knot of artillerymen in each embrasure, and the grim-looking guns all ready to open fire on the approaching invader. It really makes one nervous to venture forth into the open country from behind the shelter of the fortifications, only there are so many in it; the road like a fair all along the little roadside, inns crammed from roof to cellar with merry-makers. Between the lines and Portsdown Hill that now frowns down upon us, is a stretch of half a mile or so of level enclosed country, with farm-buildings and hedgerows, affording some cover for troops but swept by the fire of the lines, and along this strip the enemy are clearly creeping cautiously on, the sun now and then catching some bright steel point or a patch of scarlet uniform; and at this moment a fierce waft of bronzed smoke leaps out from the grassy redoubt we have just passed, and the thrilling roar of a big gun follows quick upon the sulphurous flash. The battle has commenced, and the sooner we reach the hill the better.

The little village of Cosham lies on our way to the down, and just at its foot, and this is crammed full of people, with swings and roundabouts on the outskirts, and something like a regular fair. Were all this grim earnest war, and a real invading force on our hands, how different would be the scene. The roads deserted except perhaps for some frightened peasants trying to reach some place of safety; a picket here and there, peering cautiously out; the

silence of death over the scene, as the forces steal into position. But bating the crowds, and the jollity, all seems real enough, as the gruff bark of the guns becomes more frequent, and the white smoke of musketry curls about the hill, rising fantastically into the air in a thin column, as if it were the spray from some gigantic fountain.

It is a regular breather to the top of the hill, but once there the view is a sufficient reward. At our feet the country is spread out like a map. Portsea Island, the harbour and dockyards, with a wide stretch of country on either hand, green fields and brown corn lands, and snug homesteads nestling among trees, a village spire here and there; while from hedge-rows and banks and sunken woods, puffs of smoke are wreathing with the sharp rattle of rifle-firing and the roar of the big guns. From the glittering waters of the harbour the gun-boats take up the note of battle, and Porchester forts thunder forth into the *melée*. Beyond, the Isle of Wight hangs like a blue cloud in the distance, with Spithead and its ships half veiled in mist between, and the blue sea stretches far away to the left, where steamers leave faint clouds of smoke in the horizon and white sails gleam out as they are touched by the flying sunbeams. As the clouds move gently across the sky their shadows steal over sea and land, and the clouds of war below take a more murky brassy glow; then a patch of sunshine renders visible a red line of moving figures with the sharp clear sparkle of steel and the burning glow of gold, while sometimes you hear the hoarse word of command from below or the faint clarion of a distant bugle.

So far the forts and big guns seem to have the best of the situation; the attack on our left hardly seems to progress. But now from the other side of Portsdown ridge there comes the sound of rapid and heavy firing. It is there on the landward slope of the down that the crisis of the battle is going on. And so passing the big brick casemates of Fort Widley and its grassy glacis, now one black mass of spectators, we come upon a charming landscape of green valley and brown russet woods, with ridges of blue hills rising over all. A stately mansion lies en-bosomed among park and woods on the further slope of the valley, while below us the down slopes steeply down to a cluster of farm-buildings and a network of sunken roads thereabouts. And here the fighting

is going on ding-dong, every hedge and bush crackling forth fire, while the enemy coming on in masses seem as if they would take no denial. But in these sham fights valour goes for nothing, and a desperate onslaught that would cover a regiment with deathless glory in a real battle, here only results in its being ruled out by the umpire.

And now the ridge itself is fiercely attacked on either hand; battalions seem to spring from the earth and fire right into the thick of us. Regiments are getting ragged and brigades are doubled up. But in the midst of it all comes the signal "Cease firing," and gradually the noise of battle dies away, though the fight long continues sputtering on like an ill-constructed cracker in distant parts of the field. But the battle is done and the victory won, though which are victors and which are vanquished who can tell? Not the combatants themselves, I fancy. Ben, who is presently discovered in the ranks, prone on the earth and fanning himself with his helmet, declared that the stern way in which his battalion held the Pigeon House Farm in the teeth of overpowering numbers decided the fortune of the day and saved the country from a disaster; while, farther on, a man belonging to the invading force assured me that the rush of his brigade over the hill, taking the Pigeon men on the wing, would have certainly driven the defending force from the field.

Now that the fight is over there is a lull in the interest of the scene, while the volunteers are moved hither and thither to get them into position for the march past. There is no lull, however, in the tide of spectators who are still thronging towards the scene. The red coats of the regulars are making their appearance, and smart men-o'-war's-men in numbers are swarming up to have a look at the volunteer chaps. But the bulk of the crowd is racy of the soil. All Hampshire is there—a sturdy sunburnt race—with a good share of Sussex and of Surrey too, into the bargain, all in their best clothes and best tempers. How pleasant it is to tuck up your legs on a boulder of granite—should any geologist prick up his ears at this, let him understand that these were chips left over when the forts were built—to recline upon a slab of granite, thus secure from the galloping chargers of the staff, with the stout and sturdy duke at the head of them, and from the flying crowd who are after them! How

pleasant to unfold the contents of the haversack—happy is the man who has it full on this occasion!—and make an *al fresco* banquet, with sea and land spread out at your feet, and overhead the blue sky flecked with fleecy clouds.

By the time our luncheon is over the saluting-point has been marked out, and the royal standard is waving therefrom. There could not have been a happier position—on the landward side of the down, the hill rising above and forming a kind of natural amphitheatre, where a few thousand spectators more or less are a matter of no account, and, better still, where every one of the crowd on the slope can see perfectly well without “scrouging” his neighbour, while in the space kept clear by an escort of Hussars plumes are nodding and cocked hats carolling. And soon some sharp-sighted man cries out: “There’s the Prince. Don’t you see his back?” And all the lasses on the hill are immediately on the *qui vive*, and glasses are levelled. Yes, there is the prince, sure enough, in the grey and silver of the Volunteers, with the historic big cigar in his mouth, thus rebuking, as it were, those military precisians who object to a man smoking in uniform. And we should all see him beautifully if it were not for that umbrella.

Not that it is raining at all; far from it. It is to keep off the hot sunshine that our friend in front is displaying his gingham; and that is something to chronicle for an Easter Monday. A man, I should hazard, who has been collector at Jubleypore and accustomed to a palanquin, and yet who finds the sun too hot for him on this glorious tenth of April. Still the umbrella is in the way, and the crowd in the upper rows begin to cry out good-temperedly: “Umbrella—put it down!” Whereupon our collector flings a glance of defiance at the crowd and clasps his standard more firmly. And after shouting awhile the crowd proceeds to orange-peel—a regular bombardment—when each resounding bump on the silk calls forth roars of applause. Still no surrender, and curves begin to fly, each hit hailed with rapture, while even misses are effective, witness a solid sod that lights upon the hat of our collector’s coachman and brings it to earth with a sounding thud. The coachman seems to sit up straight after this, as if he would like to find out the man who did it, but his black looks are received with shrieks of merriment. And now

there is surrender among the collector’s companions. He may be ready to die for his umbrella, but his relatives are not willing to share his fate, and finally the umbrella comes down, in a storm of applause. The collector might be the most popular man on the ground, next to the prince that is—who gets a hearty cheer as he rides up at the head of his regiment—if only he would take his defeat gracefully and make his bow to his tormentors; but no, he folds his arms grimly and scowls.

All this time the volunteers have been marching past. The artillery first, smart Hampshire men, who have handled their guns well this day, and a handful of yeomanry, and then the solid masses of infantry, while the bands play and the roar of thousands of people goes up to the skies. At this moment the sight is really impressive. The crowd of witnesses clustered upon the hillside; the brilliant staff; the masses of volunteers unwinding in a long ribbon that twirls on over hill and dale; and sun and clouds gathered together overhead to make a glorious crown to the whole scene. While in contrast to the moving scene hereabouts, the country beyond lies bathed in quietude and peace.

It is now time to make for the station, and that through dust and crowd, with guns grinding down the hills, and trotting across the flats, while the column of volunteers, dividing into various streams flows on quietly towards the different stations. And coming into the town, if it was full before it is now ten times fuller; the streets are all lined with spectators and all the first-floor windows are wide open, the inmates sitting in a dignified half-circle within. And as one of the regiments swings along, a compact mass of townspeople accompanying its march, I recognise Ben in the ranks and join him for a little chat. Ben is delighted with the whole affair. Never was such lovely straw as they slept upon the other night, and life in a fort is quite delightful. But he doesn’t mean to go home to-night, not he; he has got into the spirit of the thing, and means to join in the German tattoo at nine to-night, and see the fireworks afterwards, with a smoking concert to wind up with.

And by-and-by we are in the train and forging slowly along, moving forwards a little bit at a time, and making about four miles in the first hour, till we get out of the congestion of trains and steam along merrily homewards.

MOLLY.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MR. KERR came to dinner that day, eating his cold meat with much appetite, and not doing without pudding either; for though he kept Molly out in the meadows, wandering about and asking questions of her all the morning, so that there was no possibility of her supplying the deficiency herself, Martha took pity on her young mistress, and, despite the exigencies of washing-day, managed to serve up some pancakes greatly to Molly's gratification, and, it is to be hoped, to the guest's enjoyment. At any rate he came again, and yet again, "doing big talks," as Molly phrased it, with the old vicar about all manner of ancient ecclesiastical records, taking the girl out with him more than once on explorations after further evidences of the vanished monastery, and bringing so much new zest and interest into her life that she almost wondered how she had contrived to feel so well content with it before.

For Morris Kerr, if an enthusiast on one subject, was by no means a narrow or one-sided man. He was a very fair musician, could give Molly hints and bring out notes from the old harmonium such as her fingers had never guessed at, had travelled much and had brought back anecdotes of places, people, and pictures which sounded like a fairy tale of delight to the vicar's little daughter in her secluded home, and were not without their interest even among the good people at the farm to whom of course he had to be introduced before he had paid many visits at the vicarage. What can you do if you go to a place where there are actually only two houses, and where the parson is the farmer's cousin and the farmer is the parson's churchwarden? He was even invited to tea at the latter's house, and if he had previously appeared worthy of respect in Molly's eyes he did so doubly on that occasion, partly because of the intrinsic air of culture and good breeding which no shabby clothes or unclipped locks could disguise; and partly because of the perfect kindly courtesy with which he accepted the somewhat brusque and clumsy hospitality of his host, and made return for it in conversation and cordiality. They were not unappreciated; Farmer Dornton treating him with immense deference as a "very learned gent from foreign parts," and the girls, even the flippant Lizzie, becoming so wonderfully bashful and subdued that Molly, recalling that imper-

tinient rhyme of George Brandy's, triumphed in her inward soul, and felt an innocent pride in the effect her guest was producing which betrayed itself in such shining eyes as might have been slightly irritating to Lizzie's lover had he been there to look at them.

She was not aware of them herself, however. To her, despite Mrs. Dornton's knowing looks and the girls' jokes and giggles when alone, Mr. Kerr was for the present "father's friend" only, a connoisseur in Early Norman architecture, a hunter after antiquities, condescending indeed to make use of her as he might of any intelligent boy or girl whom he had found ready to his hand; but nothing more, nay, and she was honestly scornful and indignant when taxed with him as an admirer—nothing more as yet!

Tell me in the full dayshine
On sea and sky, th' horizon line.
Separate the salt and sweet
Where river mouth and ocean meet.
Draw me the line with pencil true
'Twixt sunset green and sunset blue;
Yet scarce thy wisest skill can prove
Where maiden's friendship blooms to love.

There came a day—it was such a little way off that I am almost afraid to define it lest those should jeer who don't know of themselves how quick love is of blossoming in girls' hearts, aye, and men's too—when Mistress Molly dipped her flag of independence, and in her foolish, rural honesty ceased to flout or deny what her heart told her was true; but instead sent up scarlet signals of distress, and ran away to hide herself like the veriest coward that ever breathed at the approach of those whose vulgar quick-sightedness had led them to the truth at an earlier date.

She had been most contemptuous with them at first when they would credit Morris Kerr with tenderer sentiments than those of a mere archæologist, most hot in asserting the dignity of pure friendship between man and woman, most proud in vaunting her own superiority to anything like silly sentiment or flirtation; but with all this she was too true to be wilfully blind, and too sensible to be actually so to facts which could not but be apparent to any unprejudiced eyes. Morris Kerr had easily solved that doubt as to his being a married man by a plain negative in answer to as plain a question from Mrs. Dornton on the occasion of his first visit to the farm; and had added of his own accord, and with a sudden smile in the bright eyes which happened to be looking at Molly, "I wish with all my

heart that I were;" but at the time she had not thought much of the words or the look, and only blushed because she saw, from Lizzie's side-glance at her sister, that the other girls did.

It was not till, after prolonging his stay for nearly a week, he said good-bye rather suddenly and left them, holding her hand in a grasp too firm for a mere acquaintance if not for old friendship before he went away; not till she had time to realise the awful blank made by his absence, the emptiness of the rooms where he had sat, the silence in the meadows where he had talked, the strange intangible cloud and chill which seemed to have fallen suddenly over the February sunshine so purely bright only the other day, that Molly began to reckon her cost in the matter; and to entertain some faint, half-angry, half-incredulous suspicions that the heart, kept so jealously untouched by friend or neighbour for twenty years, had been given away unasked to an actual stranger.

He came back. He had been away barely a fortnight when he reappeared, as suddenly as he had done that first time; and by the shock of joy and surprise, the leap of blood through every pulse and vein, poor Molly felt as though the secret hitherto unacknowledged to her own heart had rushed suddenly into the naked daylight; and, in the pride and terror of startled maidenhood, made her greeting as chilly and unexcited as her farewell had been the reverse.

Mr. Kerr felt it evidently. He had brought with him some little gifts from London: Stanley's Memorials of Palestine for the vicar, and a roll of new music for herself; but he put them down on a chair as if afraid to offer them.

"Are you disgusted at seeing me again? I am afraid you have been hoping I was gone for good," he said, looking at Molly with a kind of doubtful, disappointed enquiry; and then before she could answer he went on to explain how, in talking over his researches with a fellow antiquarian, the latter had advised him to prosecute them a little further and procure some sketches of the principal objects of interest in Lavington church; but all in such a hesitating and even embarrassed manner that only a girl trembling too much from her own self-consciousness to heed his, could have failed to discover that the excuse was but a plausible one made to cover some deeper and truer reason for his return.

She began to suspect it later when fright

and shame had had time to melt away before the intense pleasure of his return; when she found that it was she whom he intended to be the companion as heretofore of his investigations, and on whom he depended for the sketches he spoke of; when they went forth accordingly, but, instead of grubbing for conventual foundations, wandered idly along the river's bank, he far more silent than he had used to be, but drawing her on to talk of herself, her home, her cousins at the farm, who owned this meadow or that house, and how lonely the place was, as if such prattle were even more interesting to him than the enquiry in which he had seemed so much absorbed; when too he took trouble to make friends with the burly farmer her relative, and, despite the want of all natural sympathy between them, to seek him out, inspect turnip-fields and discuss the badness of the roads, the poorness of the soil, and the distance to a market-town with as much patience as though his companion were a peer and himself his humble suitor.

Yet, though in all these ways he betrayed himself, he never spoke of love; and in all their wanderings never treated the girl, so freely trusted to him, with anything but the same kindly, almost peremptory friendliness which he had shown to her at first. Only once or twice when they were together and some word of hers reminded him of his nominal pretext for lingering, a half-guilty, half-playful expression would come into his eyes, and he seemed to check himself with an effort from saying something which was on his lips; and once he asked her if she knew that he was a very poor man, and told her that at that moment he was hampered by his poverty in his dearest wish, and obliged to do what was very hard to him; but that he hoped for better days soon: days when something he was striving for— And there he stopped and coloured like a girl, and Molly turned a poppy-red face from his sight and changed the conversation all in a hurry lest he should think she wanted to know what that "something" was.

At the farm they were less shy, however. Mrs. Dornton was of opinion that if the man meant anything he ought to speak out. Maybe he had some other sweetheart holding on to him and keeping him back; those London men were bad enough for anything; or maybe 'twas only he hadn't the means to marry and felt himself too old for the girl; but anyway he had no right to go on dawdling at her tail, saying nothing;

and keeping other men off her. He should give her the chance of saying "No," at any rate. If Molly had a mother he'd have been made to do so before now; and so the next time she met him she taxed him broadly with having lost his heart in the Lavington lanes, and asked him who was the finder. Perhaps Molly knew?

Mr. Kerr looked questioningly at Molly, who, burning with wrath and mortification, had walked away.

"No, I don't think so," he said quietly; "I have not told her at any rate. Indeed, I'm afraid all the heart I had to lose was lost before I ever saw your lanes, Mrs. Dornton, pretty as they are."

"Dear heart! that was quick work," laughed the farmeress. "You're frank to confess it though, I will say; though perhaps you've done it so often you don't mind owning to it."

"Done what?" he asked coolly.

"Why, fallen in love to be sure."

"No, Mrs. Dornton, I am an unfashionable man. I have never been in love but once in my life, and I don't suppose I ever shall be."

"La! that's good hearing for someone, isn't it, girls? and she ought to be flattered. Well, Mr. Kerr, if it is so, all I hope, for your own sake, is that you are in the way of marrying and that we shall hear of it before long."

"Thank you for your kind interest in my affairs. I hope greatly that I am," he answered; and though the words were perfectly civil, they somehow had a silencing effect on Mrs. Dornton, and induced her to leave him and the vicarage in peace.

The next day Mr. Kerr left too. He told them in the morning that he had had letters summoning him back to town at once; and the kindly simple old vicar was so touched by the ill-concealed pain and agitation in his guest's manner as the latter bade him farewell and thanked him repeatedly for his hospitality, that he told him heartily such gratitude was quite needless and that they were as sorry to part from him as he could be to go. Molly said nothing—nothing at all; but when Morris Kerr asked her if she would not walk with him as far as the high road she got her hat at once and went without a word.

He was silent also until they had nearly reached the end of the glebe; and then he turned suddenly and said with a forced smile which made the girl's heart flutter:

"I wonder how I am to thank you for all your kindness and trouble?"

"Please don't," said Molly simply.

"What, not for taking up your time and using you as I have been doing?"

"I liked it," she said in the same tone.

"We have not much change here."

"Should you like a change if I brought it you?" and he smiled a little. "Do you know I am longing to tell you something? I don't feel as if it was fair to you to have been silent for so long; and yet it would be hardly honourable to speak."

"Please don't then," said Molly quickly, and crimsoning. "I should not like you to do anything that was not that. I would rather not know it."

"But perhaps your father may think badly of me afterwards?" he suggested.

"Father and I always think the same," said the girl gently. "You need not be afraid of us."

"Then what would he think if he were to find out that, much as I care for the beauty of this grand old church of his, it is not the only thing in Lavington which is of interest to me; nor the anchor which has held me here so long and made me trespass on his hospitality as I have done?"

"He—would think——" Her breath fluttered a little, and her soft shining eyes grew pitifully shy under their neighbour's scrutiny. "I do not think he would be angry. He likes you."

"I don't deserve to be liked by him," said Morris. "And yet if it were only honest to do so I should like to tell you the whole story now. I think if you knew how all the happiness of my life depends—— But I forget what a young girl you are. You might laugh at me perhaps."

Molly looked up at him.

"No, I should not do that," she said, "but I will not have you dishonest for me, even to yourself. I like better to trust you."

"Thank you for saying so. At any rate you will know soon, I hope."

"Then I can wait."

"And you will promise when you do, not to be angry with me? I should like to tell you now."

There was a ring of suppressed trouble in his voice, and Molly guessing at more beneath it, lifted her eyes with a kind of sweet bravery to him.

"No, I will not be angry; and I would rather wait to hear. I will wait any time."

"Good-bye then."

But ere he got to the top of the hill he looked back once. Molly was still standing at the gate where they parted, a silent motionless little figure framed in brown, leafless trees against a background of cold grey sky; and as he waved his hand to her she lifted hers in reply. He could not see that it was wet with tears.

"So that was how it all came about," said Morris Kerr, shutting the sketch-book and taking off his spectacles. "The railway company got their Act for a line to be made between Wandleford and Redditch; and I got promoted and my salary doubled before the year was out."

The child on his knee—there were two in the room, a boy and girl—looked disappointed.

"And is that all?"

"No, not all; for then grandpa relented and gave me leave to marry mother, and we lived happily ever afterwards."

"But I don't understand," said the boy. "I thought you said that little picture there of the church porch led to all the luck of your life."

"And so it did, my lad. Don't you see, the railway people were very anxious that the plan for the new line shouldn't leak out till they knew exactly how much it would cost them, and whether the traffic, etc., would repay the outlay. The fact was they were rather short of funds at the time, and knew that if the secret wasn't carefully kept a certain wealthy firm of contractors would step in and buy up all the ground to sell them again at a far higher price than they could get it from the original owners; so it was only by using what mother irreverently calls my antiquity mania and pretending to be simply engaged in hunting up records of the old church, that I was able to manage it and yet find out all they wanted."

"And the old clergyman who did that picture helped you?"

"The old clergyman and his daughter. It was she drew that picture. A dear, quaint little soul she was. I remember thinking it was rather shabby not to tell them all about it."

"Why didn't you, papa?" said the girl, parting his grizzly beard to kiss him.

"Because, my lassie, I was sworn to hold my tongue, and it would have ruined me if

by not doing so the matter had leaked out."

"Did you tell her afterwards and thank her?"

"Why no, my dear, I'm ashamed to say I didn't. You see the day I left there I had got news that mother was very ill and I could think of nothing but getting to her. She was a long, long while too before she got better, so it was fortunate that my work was done, and the directors so well pleased with me that they thought I had earned a holiday, for I forgot everything else in the world in my fear of losing the one for whom I had been working and waiting so many years."

"Dear Morris!" said his wife, going up to him. "And yet we were nearer our marriage then than we had ever hoped to be."

"Yes, your father wouldn't believe till then in a son-in-law who could blend business with such unlucreative occupation as papers on early Norman remains, and rubbishy ruins. Ah well! wait till I make a big fortune by my book on English Ecclesiastical Antiquities, and we'll see what he'll say then!"

Molly is still waiting. It is twelve years now since she said good-bye at the gate; and in all that time she had never seen Morris Kerr again or had any message from him. The people at the farm, who have grown rich by the railway which runs through the quiet valley, call her an old maid and say that he jilted her; but Molly believes in him still, and believes that some day yet, when he has earned the right to do so, he will come back and tell her that story for which she has been waiting so long.

I think she will go on doing so till her death.

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